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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#) [IR](#) [KU](#) [KUWAIT](#) [IRAN](#) [RELATIONS](#)
KUWAIT-IRAQ RELATIONS
SUBJECT: FOREIGN AFFAIRS CHAIRMAN URGES U.S. TO SUPPORT
IRAQI TRIBES AND PRESSURE GCC ON IRAQ

Classified By: CDA Matt Tueller for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C/NF) During an October 15 meeting with PolChief, Mohammed Jassem Al-Sager, the Speaker of the Arab Parliament and the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the Kuwaiti Parliament, characterized the prospect of GCC countries gradually accepting an Iraqi government dominated by Shi'a religious parties as "a disaster." "Neither the Shi'a nor the Sunnis (in Iraq) are our friends," he explained. The Chairman continued: "Hizb Al-Dawa are Iranians, as are the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI). We can't trust them. We can't open a dialogue with them because they go right to the Iranians." Al-Sager, a liberal Sunni, argued that only liberal Iraqis, "like Iyad Allawi and the heads of the Shi'a tribes," could be trusted to govern the country. He stressed the importance of supporting the tribes and urged the U.S. to provide them with real support in the "tens of millions of dollars" to counter Iranian influence and money among Iraqi "Islamist institutions." Al-Sager asked if the U.S. had "considered replacing (Hizb) Al-Dawa with Iyad Allawi in a peaceful coup" or "engaging in dialogue with the former regime." PolChief stated firmly that these were not/not realistic options.

¶2. (C/NF) Al-Sager urged the U.S. to have "a frank discussion" with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and "half convince, half order them" to get more involved in Iraq, particularly on the economic front. "Why don't we (the GCC) recognize this (Iraqi) government?" he asked rhetorically. The Chairman expressed frustration that Kuwait and Iraq had yet to exchange Ambassadors, saying "this should have been done three years ago." He also criticized a recent GOK decision requiring visas for all travel to/from Iraq, arguing that this hurt business and economic relations between the two countries. Al-Sager is planning to travel to Iraq after Eid in his capacity as Speaker of the Arab Parliament and asked for assistance in traveling there.

¶3. (C/NF) Turning to Iran, Al-Sager described GCC efforts to agree on a common policy as "a nightmare." The Iranians are pragmatic and very adept at getting what they want, "but ultimately they will come to terms with the EU and the U.S.," he said. On the recent conflict between Hizballah and Israel, Al-Sager argued that "Hizballah lost the war" and was now "in deep trouble" on the domestic front, having lost its justification for retaining its weapons.

¶4. (C/NF) Comment: Famously independent, Al-Sager speaks largely for himself and not for the GOK or even the Parliament as a whole. However, the intensity of his views on the political situation in Iraq, and on international efforts to contain Iran, are representative of the feelings of many Kuwaitis who feel that their future is held hostage

to near-by events beyond their control.

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